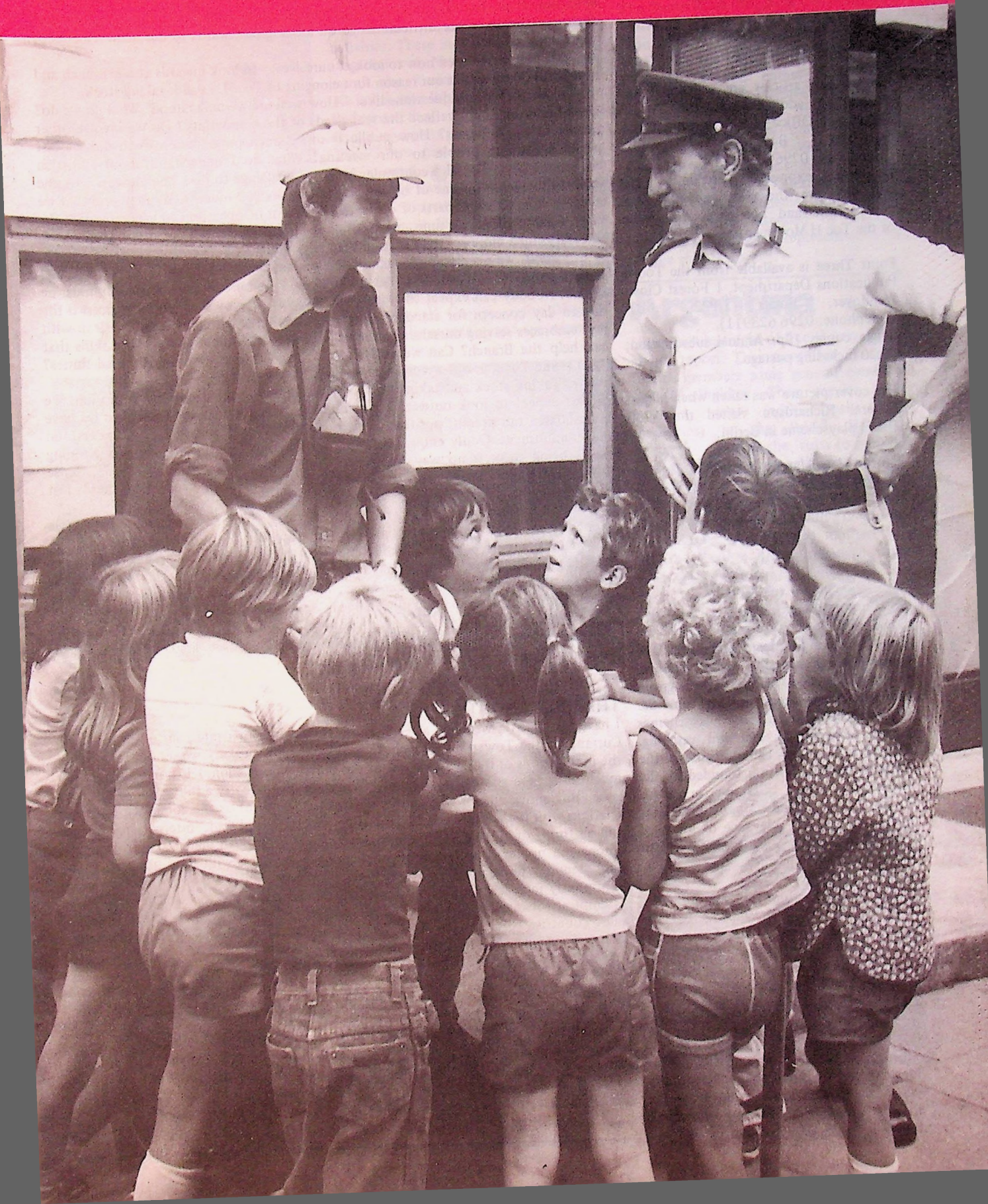


Point Three



The Torch magazine
May 1981 10p



Point Three

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Letters and articles are welcomed and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911). Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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The cover picture was taken when Major-General Richardson visited the 1980 Toc H playscheme in Berlin.

Photo: Klaus Marche, Army PR



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House — the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points — to think fairly.

Personal View

STOCKS AND SHARES

During this year and next we could all usefully join in an exercise of reappraisal in our Branches. It is very easy to go on looking only on what needs to be done elsewhere and only slightly more difficult to go on looking backwards to our achievements of yesterday.

I believe we need now to look at ourselves — to look inwards at our Branch and how it functions and at our reason for belonging to Toc H. I call it taking stock.

We should ask questions like — How well are we understood? What do we do? Does our jobmastery reflect the real needs of the community? Do we involve other people in our schemes? How public is our Branch programme? When did we last personally invite people to our meeting? What do I understand about Christian commitment? Is Toc H a continuing personal challenge to me? The answers to some extent provide an outline of objectives for the next 12 months. We may find that we need to discard some parts of our present pattern of operation to accommodate the plan. Change of night, time, meeting place or types of officer in the Branch etc. Is secretaryship a more central function than jobmastery?

Next, we need to understand ourselves and what we can do for Toc H — I call it taking our share. We are, after all, a Family and the burden of responsibility must be shared. Nobody can expect to reach objectives or to enjoy even modest success if the day to day concern for standards is left to overburdened individuals. To 'leap with joy' embraces serving ourselves just as much as serving others. Do we have skills that can help the Branch? Can we find time to take District, Area or Regional duties? Talents and Time, in other words participation.

Taking stock and taking shares is the prelude to a period of regeneration. We cannot expect to look outwards towards new communities until and unless we have consolidated our present position, have regained our confidence and fully understood our commitment. Oddly enough, in some Branches this may mean doing less. Keeping busy, being busy is no way to enjoy Toc H or promote its growth. In a sense jobmastery begins on our knees. Tubby's expression 'Feet firm, hands busy' means just that.

Toc H has lost ground in the post-war years. But let us understand that it has been due as much to our insistence on the unpopular notion that we should be personally committed as to bad Branches and stronger local competition. There are still people who seek, often desperately, for that deeper commitment which is so absent in today's organisation, even some churches. Taking stock and taking shares will reveal them to us and the build up can begin.

Then will come the second phase: 'to look outwards' at fresh communities. To win new people will require effort and change. It begins with changes in ourselves, and our willingness to take stock and take shares.

Huw Gibbs

THE RICH AND THE POOR

I have just spent a weekend at Cuddesdon House on a first rate course run by David Currant for the Tower Hill Branch. Helped by visiting speakers, we set out to consider the implications of the 1980 Report of the Brandt Commission. I do not propose to say much more here about this weekend because we plan to carry a full report in our next issue. But above all our discussions highlighted for all of us the complexities of our relations with the world's poorest countries. We considered trade, international finance and all forms of aid and we found no ready answers. Though there are big differences among the poorer countries, most of them have problems with food production and land tenure, population increase, unemployment and trade. These have been enormously increased by the OPEC cartel's forcing up of oil prices since 1973. Every attempt at solving these problems produces new ones! Meanwhile the indebtedness of poor countries to rich ones soars each year and the already frightening gap between rich and poor grows wider each year.

- The Brandt Report makes two points very forcibly:
1. It is not only right but also in our own interest to enable poorer countries to raise their living standards. Our survival is at stake as much as theirs.
 2. It can be done: all the resources needed are at hand.

Evan Luard has produced for Oxfam a small attractive folder of leaflets, each one setting out plainly one aspect of the Brandt Report's analysis and practical recommendations. There is also a leaflet spelling out what you and I can do. This is out of print at present but I hope to have a supply within a few days. If you want one for Branch use, please ask us and include 20p per copy to cover postage.

The Wider Family

Poperinge



In March, the New Zealand High Commissioner and his wife visited the Old House, accompanied by a representative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The second edition of the newsletter of 'Tubby's Poperinge Group' reached me recently and it is packed with information about their members' activities. These included a four day walk (together with Newport's Toc H Rangers) round the World War I battlefields – 30 km a day! While the Rangers were in Poperinge they shared in one of the Group's projects in an old people's home. The Group has also run a party for handicapped young people and have decorated a local old people's home with some 80 residents whom Group members visit regularly. Over Christmas they took gifts to these old people and toured the town taking a Christmas candle to all those living alone. The Group has built up contacts particularly with two young English Toc H Groups – the 'Magpies' and the 'Flintstones' – and are organising exchange visits.

Photo: Scott Shaw



Charles and Ivy Swan are now settled in as honorary warden and housekeeper of the Old House and many of you will have met them. Married for 33 years, they have three sons, one daughter and six grandchildren. Charles has had a varied life. He was a PoW for five years. Since the war, he has worked as a male nurse in a mental hospital and as a chauffeur – gardener. He has run a driving school and worked in a home for the elderly – a post from which he was medically retired following a serious fall. Ivy is proudest of her major task of bringing up her family so well. Between times, she has been a film projectionist, a pools clerk with Littlewoods and worked in Charles' home for the elderly. We all give them a very warm Toc H welcome and sincerely hope that their travels are over for some time to come!

Photo: Clare Currant



Some Tower Hill Branch members engrossed in the Brandt Report during a study weekend at Cuddesdon House. See also the editor's column on p2 of this issue.

Australia

The Queensland Hon Area Commissioner writes to tell us of the recent death of foundation member James Celtic Arkell MBE at the age of 81. He was Queensland's 1966 'Father of the Year' and latterly Vice-President of Toc H Australia. Among his many Toc H concerns were the health and welfare of children in Queensland's remote country areas and he served for some 25 years as chairman of the Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme. Jim's funeral in January was attended by Toc H members and scores of representatives of welfare societies.

Argentina

I have just had sight of Toc H Argentina's annual report. They now have 22 active Branch members, some 'general' members and 18 Builders. Their regular work includes visits (with books and magazines) to the British Hospital, helping to run a creche, visits to patients in two mental homes and assisting their Branch padre share Holy Communion with hospital patients. They give increasing practical help with a creche for the children of unmarried mothers and with a Salvation Army orphanage. They observed Michaelmas and had an excellent turnout for their annual rally. Last year they started a fund in memory of their founder member Mrs Norah Hunter CBE ('Auntie Norah') who died early in 1980. A tablet to her memory has been unveiled in St John's Cathedral. Much of Norah's time was spent with patients in the British Hospital and, as the income from her memorial fund permits, donations will be made to the hospital.

Germany



Photo: Army PR

Another unusual arrival! Fred Mason, Warden of the Verden Toc H Club was a welcome visitor to the Guides', Scouts' and Brownies' Christmas fete.

Welcome

The following Branches elected new members during February and March:

- 5 – High Brooms (m)
- 4 – Bedford (j) Group
- 3 – Andover (j)
- 2 – Kimberworth (j), Levenmouth (j) Group, Nailsea (m), Pickering (j)
- 1 – Acklam (w), Barkingside (m), Barrow-on-Humber (j), Bognor Regis (j), Buckingham (m), Chalfonts (m), Chard (m), Cleveland District Branch, Dittons (j), Eyemouth (j), Greathouse (j), Leicester District, Loughton (m), Mill Hill (m), Morecambe (j), North Hinksey (j), Paddock (w), Rushden (w), Seaford (j), Watford (w)

A warm welcome to 40 new members

In Brief...

● Mona Bazeley of Rushden (Northants) Afternoon Branch has sent us an attractive card carrying a 'thank you' message. Mona is also a member of the local Hard of Hearing Club and she tells us that the Club want publicly to thank 'Barbara' – a Rushden Royal Branch member – for all the help she gives them. Barbara's own Branch meets on the same night as the Club so that she gives up her own Branch fellowship whenever she goes to help her hard of hearing friends.

● We have an interesting news letter from Levenmouth (Tayforth) Joint Group. They have just enrolled two new members, both of whom started as staunch supporters of the Group's projects. Despite very bad weather early in the year, members of this Group, backed by their many enthusiastic helpers, continued their work without a break. This work includes their help with a 'meals on wheels' service, regular visits to the elderly and housebound and to the Cameron Hospital and the collection and redistribution to those in need of furniture of all kinds. The Group points out that the bad economic situation has hit their area hard and increasing numbers of their neighbours are in need of them. They say 'it is only with help from those with the right kind of experience that we can make ourselves of use; therefore, the Group will always be grateful to those Toc H veterans and staff who are so ready to give us guidance in all our projects.' Well done Levenmouth and best wishes from us all.

● Denton Searchlight (E Sussex) Branch writes to tell us of some of their current activities. Most of their members are disabled residents of 'Searchlight Workshops' and they hold their meetings in one of their recreation rooms. Each week they hold a raffle and put all the proceeds in a special account. This year the account was used to provide 41 Christmas parcels for local senior citizens, all the packing and distribution being handled by members (with the much valued help of their friendly corner shop grocer). Since then they have donated £25 towards the upkeep of the scanner unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital besides their regular contributions to the Family Purse.

● We were delighted to hear the news that Owton Manor (Hartlepool) Women's Branch recently mounted a special coffee evening with bring and buy stalls to raise money for a donation of £75 towards the running of the Movement.

● A news letter from Bournemouth and Christchurch Joint Branch shows the area as active as ever. In February, the Wessex District held their annual dinner and dance at the Embassy Hotel for more than 60 members and friends. Christmas activities by Branch members included carol singing which raised £56 towards the 150 gifts passed to the residents of four Bournemouth homes for the elderly. In the middle of these efforts the Branch celebrated its ninth birthday with a festive evening rounded off with an excellent address by Toc H President Ken Bloxham. They started this IYDP year with a gift of two replacement batteries and a charger for the 'chairmobiles' used by the local Training Centre for the

Mentally Handicapped. The Branch followed up their gifts with a visit to the Centre which carries out most impressive work with its residents. Then in March the Branch held their annual Rededication Service. They have attracted a number of fine speakers to their Branch meetings. One of them, the Principal of the Wessex School for the Autistic, spoke movingly of the work in her school and outlined new patterns of treatment: the Branch responded with a donation towards the founding and equipment of a new centre, including holiday facilities for the autistic. They are now busy in their new role of 'collectors' of tools for the imaginative scheme 'Tools for Self Reliance'. (See Peter Ranken's article in our December 1980 issue).

● Sybil Welch of Richmond (Surrey) Joint Branch tells us that the Branch has just given a party at which some of the users of the Talking Newspaper were able to meet and exchange views with members of the production team and their helpers – altogether around 80 people and four guide dogs! A lively programme by The Serenaders was followed by a splendid tea (with a 'second birthday cake') and an hour of informal discussion. The guide dogs, of course, behaved impeccably and each one received a 'gift wrapped Bonio'. Richmond hope that this highly successful party will be the first of many.

This Branch has a very special interest in their local Talking Newspaper, having played a major part in launching it two years ago. There are now some 200 listeners and the 100th tape has just been published.



Two of Dyfed's Toc H gardeners – Ernest Long and Frank Webber – at their Branch's gardencraft school at the Friends' Bazaar, St David's Hospital, Carmarthen.

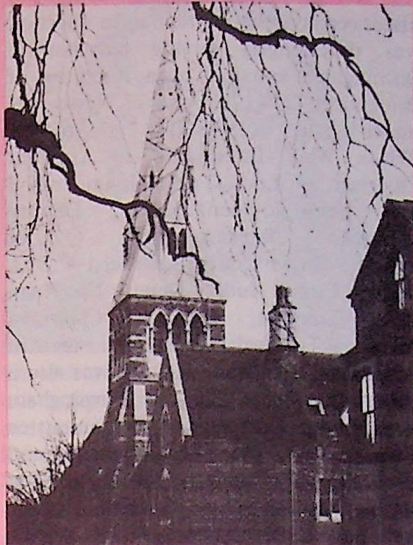
Photo: Arid Jones, Talybont

Community House in Nottingham

(See also Point Three March 1981 p15)

1. Role of the Church in the Inner City

by Revd Paul Watts
Vicar, All Saints, Nottingham



Provincial inner city areas are usually small enough to allow a considerable mix of people and buildings over a relatively

small distance. Really bad housing, or 'gentrification' is more likely to be in patches of a few streets than a few acres. So churches can encompass a wide variety of social class, background, income and race. The monochrome sifted society is more likely to be found in the 20,000 person outer city estate. But with this variety goes the danger that the church simply maintains the virtues of the securely employed, properly housed, reasonably self satisfied who include piety among their interests. Since inevitably a proportion will be 'foreigners' — those who have moved away for 'self-improvement', and who return to maintain old ways — the church is readily trapped in appearing a parasite middle class institution, alien to the real needs of the area, presenting a Gospel of Divine duty to social climbing and personal comfort.

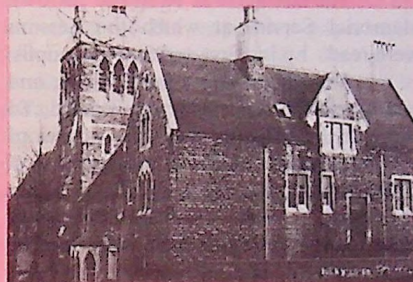
Grace grows out of the duty of the church to all in the area, not just those in the congregation. The variety and complexity of their needs opens up the question, 'What is the Gospel? What is

new life, liberation, for people who live here?' Here is a basic question of faith.

A purely personal answer will create a pietistic church. Real liberation includes a way of life strong and supportive enough to heal fears and failures, creative of healthy and accepting relationships, but this attitude to life is essentially individualistic and therefore socially 'right wing'. An analysis of inner city issues as sin — unemployment, racial intolerance, unequal access to housing and health facilities or education — leads on to a discovery of Jesus as Lord of the structures, the bureaucracies, the administrative machinery that occasionally creates the attitudes which in turn concentrate the problems.

This is my suggested role for the church in the inner city. It is to use and depend on information about the area, to propose its own ideology or explanation of the inequalities and injustices there are around, and to try to see what it means to say that Jesus is Lord of the structures of sin.

2. Proposed 'John Perkins House' by James E Power



All Saints is an inner city parish, near the centre of Nottingham, and at present undergoing extensive re-development. A Christian Community to aid the ministry of the parish church appears to be a sensible and creative use of the resources available. Therefore, the Parish and Toc H are working together to set up a Community House with room for six residents.

The development of the community will be based on three fundamental principles:

1. To develop life together as a Christian Community, with a regular pattern of prayer playing a central part;
2. To work out what it means to be a Christian Family in relation to the local church and neighbourhood;
3. To develop as a community which can be a strong point in the parish and provide human resources for some of

the community activities envisaged, especially among young people.

The ministry of the community will be based on the conviction that Christ's ministry was one of reconciliation, and that through openness and compassion we can find unity in diversity. Sustained by a daily discipline of prayer, we will seek a Christian response to the social issues raised by the poverty of the area.

The living out of these principles will be an exploration into 'practical weekday Christianity' and a 'living out of the way of Jesus'. It is impossible to say exactly how this will be carried out as this will have to be explored corporately by the community; however, it is hoped that meals would be shared, there would be a regular act of worship, a weekly house communion, and that members would feel that they could join the congregation at the parish church. At the same time each member will be engaged in the discovery of his individual role.

Although the parish church is Anglican, it is hoped that there will be an ecumenical dimension so that links are formed with other local churches.

The scope of the work within the parish is enormous. It is estimated that there is a population of 6,000 within ten minutes walking distance of the house, and that over 500 families will have moved to the

area by 1982. It is important that there should be support and development of local facilities to cater for such a community. The current problem is the high rate of unemployment: it is estimated that 50% of households in the area have no wage earner. Therefore, it is important that alternative opportunities are explored with these people. The church has newly renovated sporting facilities and has plans to open workshops which could be utilised in this way. The high incidence of 'latchkey children' is an area in which there is scope for the provision of 'end of school' activities. It would be hoped that some liaison could be made with local welfare groups, housing associations, schools and the social services.

Based on the Four Points of the Compass — Friendship, Service, Fairmindedness, and the Kingdom of God, — life in the house must be a response not only to the problems of the immediate area but to the whole world, where people are threatened with starvation and poverty. Using the model and inspiration of Acts 4, 'Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common', the aim is to build a living community of love, so that all who visit us may feel Christ's welcome through us.

We will Remember...

Lack of space has compelled us to hold over some obituary notices received. We hope to include these in future issues.
— Editor

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In September

Hilda M Planton (East Dereham)
Ernest C Richardson (Bristol East District)

In January

J A 'Jimmy' Exton (Ashby-de-la-Zouch)
Frederick C L Leigh (West Wales District)
Rev E Lootens (Central Overseas)

In February

Percy Brooks (Lymington)
George H Cox (Woking)
G Joseph Cullen (Ramsgate & Newington)
Muriel M Felton (Netherton)
F Peyton Gregory (West Essex District)
William T Harris (Treforest)
Gerald S Hine (Macclesfield)
W Field Hunt (Birmingham District)
Charles W Lloyd (Llandrindod Wells)
Joseph Mottram (Stockport District)
Wilfred Smith (Huddersfield District)
Elizabeth M Walkey (Ealing)
Annie 'Micky' Watson (West Central)

In March

Harry Berry (Loughborough)
Douglas Cockburn (Mill Hill)
Joan M Fraser (Taunton)
Hilda Green (Bingham)
Alice D N Waters (Reading)

The following have been notified as having died but no dates were given:

Edith E Buckingham (Finchley & Whetstone)
Leslie J Godbold (Lee)
Arthur A Mills (Earley)

Eric Tucker died in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, on 23 January at the age of 76, following a heart attack. Eric was a considerable Toc H figure in our pioneer days and had been editor of 'Compass', the journal of Toc H South Africa.

Brian Billings, died at his home in Adelaide, on 23 February, age 72.

Brian was surely one of the 'Apostolic Age' of the early 1930s, for, as a young insurance executive, he was caught by the magic of Tubby's vision, and the challenge to bring men together in a new and practical fellowship. For some years he served as an Area Secretary and was then picked for work in Australia, being appointed after a few months of 'training' as Organising Secretary for Victoria. His team included 'Bobby' (AG) Howes, Helen Benbow, Alan Cowling, and Padre Watson. They drew leaders together from trade and commerce, arts and science, politics and

religion. The State Governor would 'drop in' to a meeting after some splendid State function. In 1939 Brian took over the Australian Secretaryship from Alan Cowling.

On the outbreak of war he joined an Australian Regiment but was discharged two years later owing to a constitutional weakness which was to plague him much of his life. But this did not stop his Toc H enthusiasm, and he returned to this country to work at developing Toc H Service Clubs.

But his heart was in Australia, and in 1947 he returned there at the invitation of Jack Uren (then Chairman of our S Aust Executive) to join his firm. He found satisfaction in the world of business, and also met Mollie who became his wife in 1948 — a happy and strong partnership. Here too his love for cricket flourished: he numbered some of the great Australian players of the last 30 years among his friends, and his collection of cricket literature became his delight.

Tubby's words were true of Brian: *'We don't thank men in Toc H: we thank God for men'...*

Ken Bloxham

Lymington (Hants) Joint Branch write to tell us that Percy Brooks, for many years Branch Chairman, died in February. Percy first joined Toc H in S Africa where he worked courageously to improve race relations.

'We recently heard with sadness of the death of Revd Frank Spurway at the age of 86... While curate at St Andrew's Church, Taunton, in the early 20s, Frank was visited by his friend Tubby and as a result of this meeting the Taunton Branch was formed. Subsequently, Frank started the League of Women Helpers, both Branches flourishing until 1979, when the present Joint Branch was established...

Frank was a great sportsman — hockey Blue, a Somerset County cricketer, a good shot and no mean fisherman. His impressive personality, enhanced by a distinguished appearance, natural dignity and deep, rich voice encouraged his easy relationships with his fellows which so often developed into abiding friendships. With his simple Christian Faith he was a vital influence in building up the spirit of the Branches. He had a quiet wisdom, gentle humour and sympathetic understanding of men...

His many old friends remember his life with profound gratitude.'

LFPB

'W Field Hunt died in February. A call from the Birmingham Voluntary Bureau some five and half years ago to find a voluntary job in the Regional Office for a pensioner proved somewhat disconcerting: the gentleman in question was the longest serving barrister in Birmingham and had been Recorder of Bridgnorth (1941-45) and of Newcastle-under-Lyme (1945-71). Moreover, 'Who's Who' listed him as Assistant Chairman of Local Tribunals under N I and Unemployment Acts, Deputy Chairman Worcestershire Quarter Sessions, Crown Court Recorder 1972-73, Deputy Circuit Judge, Deputy Chairman Land Tribunal, Assistant Chairman Industrial Tribunals, and an Hon Freeman of Newcastle-under-Lyme. He was also a Governor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, a Committee Member of the Three Choirs Festival, and Chairman of Committee of VSOP in Moseley, as well as being a member of the Birmingham District Branch of Toc H.

Yet for the past five and half years his greatest joy, as he was wont to tell all his friends, has been to act as 'office boy' in the Regional Office for W Mids/S Wales, addressing envelopes and seeing to bulk distributions.

His last act was to devise his own Memorial Service at which the Lessons were read by his first and last law pupils.

He was a very humble man, and one whose presence is sorely missed. To the end, he sought to sing the praises of the Movement in which he found real friendship and for which he has developed a very deep love. A truly remarkable gentleman who will long be remembered.'

GLL

Percy Charles Veness, a founder member of Southend-on-Sea Men's Branch, died in hospital after a long illness on 19 January. He served with 141 Battery in France in the First World War and was with Tubby in Poperinge in the early Talbot House days. Percy was a Toc H foundation member and his devout and loyal service to the Movement he loved was unbroken. One of his particular interests was our Young Seafarers' Club in Southampton. Percy's widow, Ethel, has all our sympathy and prayers. She writes to tell us that Percy has left to Toc H a crucifix which he lent to Tubby in 1915 and which was in constant use in the Upper Room of the Old House until the end of the war.

We give thanks for their lives

From the Director

by Ken Prideaux-Brune



The debate on 'The Way Forward', which was initiated at Central Council last year, continues and members of the Central Executive have visited Branches and Districts to take part in some of these discussions. The debate, however, must not be allowed to become simply an academic exercise. Discussion must lead to action. The primary objective is to ensure that the Movement continues to be sufficiently alive and magnetic to attract new members.

'The Way Forward' was an attempt to share a vision, to convey something of the very deep experience which the Executive had during a weekend last July. Conveying a vision is always difficult and it can't be done through words on paper. Discussion of a document like this has, inevitably, to

start with arguments about what particular words and phrases mean. All too easily it never gets beyond arguments about the choice of words. Such arguments blanket this vision in a mist from which it will never re-emerge.

For this reason the Executive has reached the conclusion that it would not be right to bring the paper, or a new, improved version of it, back to Council in November. To do so would almost inevitably lead to long, and ultimately sterile, arguments about forms of words and would run the danger of deflecting attention away from the fundamental concepts that underlie those words. The Executive believes it would be more helpful to report on the progress it has made and to invite Councillors to report on progress made in Branches and Districts. The opportunity of the Council weekend can best be used for a sharing of experience.

Talking about the vision which the paper expressed in words like 'mission' and 'ministry' is only of very limited value. Only as the vision is lived will it make any real sense. I am reminded of some words by Laurens van der Post:

** 'The symbol and the images in which this greater self pursued us were always more than any dogma, theory or imagination could express. The answers it sought had to be lived before they could be known. So the time for exhortation, dogma and hair-splitting words had gone, a time had come when only a true example of love accurately re-experienced and lived in an individual round of life could open up the collective life of our time for the re-entry of love and submission to the rule of the greatest law of creation'.*

The starting point is seeing a need to which we are willing to be personally committed. Once a group, however small, are really committed to meeting a need others will come in and join them. The resources, of people, of skills, of money, will be there to enable the job to be done.

The second stage is the attempt to see, and to help others to see, what we are being taught about life through that experience. This can come only through a willingness to share ourselves with each other in a relationship of openness and trust. I had the privilege recently of sharing an evening with a group of members in Rushden who feel that the normal meetings of their respective Branches do not provide the opportunity for this kind of sharing. Branch business and listening to a speaker leave too little time for any discussion of the deeper things of life. Those who feel this way have therefore decided to come together once a month, meeting in homes, for this kind of talk and sharing with each other. The evening I was with them was only the second of these monthly gatherings. I am sure, however, that this initiative will in time have a significant impact on the life of each of the Branches concerned.

The debate on 'The Way Forward' is giving us some clear pointers for the future. But I am convinced that the answers, in Laurens van der Post's words, 'have to be lived before they can be known'. The most compelling statement about Toc H is not a collection of words, however expertly juggled; it is 'a true example of love . . . lived in an individual round of life'.

* In *A Mantis* Carol Hogarth Press 1975

Reigate and Redhill (Surrey) Women's Branch have so far knitted 12 huge blankets – and they have wool in hand for plenty more. The completed blankets have gone to Clayton House, Crawley. In the picture, Branch Secretary Jean Moss shows some of the Branch's work.



Photo: Surrey and S London Newspapers

JESUS & THE KINGDOM

It is in one of St Paul's most fiery, almost contemptuous, Epistles — that to the Galatians — that we come across some of his profoundest insights most simply expressed. It is almost as though he needed to get wound up before he could come out with such simplicity as this: *'The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self control'*. It puts the whole thing in a nutshell, for, as well as being described as the fruits of the Spirit, these may be called the signs of the Kingdom. Some, or all, of these qualities may be found in all Jesus' parables, whether they are specifically about the Kingdom or not, and they are the signs by which we may know the Kingdom, wherever we come across it. And, since we have already noted Jesus' complete lack of exclusiveness, let us note it here too: there is nothing in those fruits of the Spirit, or signs of the Kingdom, which might not be found in any culture, in any religion, anywhere in the world, and wherever and in whoever you find these signs there the Spirit of God is at work and there his Kingdom is.

Many of Jesus' parables are quite straightforward — one may recognise justice and truth in them with little difficulty. Not all conform to this, however. Some are intended to set people back on their heels and make them think afresh about society and the values which they have come to take for granted. Such a parable is the story of the Labourers in the Vineyard. While the story is one which has been familiar to Christians from earliest days, it's not all that easy to explain. It appears to commend what we would regard as an injustice, a clear contradiction of the rule of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. So what's Jesus really talking about? Here were men who had worked through the hot Mediterranean day being paid the same as those who had worked only for an hour or two in the cool of the evening. What's more, when those who had been there all day made their feelings known, the reply they got would hardly have satisfied a modern trades unionist. In any such situation in our society there would be an instant strike, and one would feel sympathy for the strikers. Here, surely, is a classic case of a high handed employer dispensing social injustice, with every evidence of self righteous self justification. I don't doubt that there were those then, as there are those now, who dismiss that story on just those grounds. There have been, too, those in the past who have used it as an excuse for behaving that way towards those whom they employed. You

can, indeed, find support for almost any kind of attitude or behaviour within the pages of the Bible if you pick the right bit, take it out of context, and misunderstand it in just the right way for you! But it's more profitable — and rather more honest — to try and see what Jesus was really saying.

We need to be quite clear in our minds to begin with that standing around in the market place was much the same as standing around at a labour exchange or job centre is now — it was the recognised way in which men found employment. Remember that, until recently, our own dock labourers used to present themselves at the dock gates day by day to be taken on — or not taken on! In Jesus' time that system was the norm, and in most villages and in every town you would find groups of men, from a mere handful up to quite considerable numbers, waiting for employment. As the day wore on most groups would become more or less fully employed, but sometimes men would wait all day for nothing. It is that situation which forms the background to Jesus' story. All his listeners would know the system, and no doubt many of them had had first hand experience of it, either as employers or employed. So what was Jesus saying?

The easiest way to interpret the parable is to use the Augustinian method. St Augustine believed that all the parables were allegories, and the church followed him for hundreds of years. In this story, seen as an allegory, the vineyard is the Kingdom of God, the master is God himself, the labourers are those who hear and respond to the voice of God, and enter his Kingdom at his invitation. The reward to the labourers is all the same because we are all equals in the sight of God, and anyway, if God may not do what he will with his own, who may? The church held to that method of interpretation for generations, and it is a method that is not without its value. In fact, in treating the parable as if it were a parable of the Kingdom we are ourselves in some sense using it as an allegory. Treated in this way the parable has a good deal to teach us about the Kingdom. We learn that we are drawn into it by God himself, at his invitation. We learn that we have to wait for that invitation in the right ways and with the right attitudes. We learn that the call of God might come to a person at any time in his life, right up to the end, and we learn that the reward for answering that call is the same for all.

One of the main themes of the story is that we cannot *earn* our way into the Kingdom — it reinforces what we were thinking earlier about the notion of worthiness as we understand it being inappropriate to what Jesus has to say about the Kingdom. It teaches us also that we cannot earn more of a share in it than others — the gift is the Kingdom, neither more nor less. We learn, too, that the Kingdom has no concept of *rights* as we understand them, but only of *needs*. We find, too, that those who complain that they have not had their rights are treated as though they had no understanding whatever of what they had got into, although for all that they are not cast out. We also learn about the basis of equality in the Kingdom. It is not a question of us all being grey-ly the same, of making sure that no one has more than I have, nor yet of generously making sure that no one has less. It is not a matter of carefully sharing out all the available resources. St Paul grasped it, and expressed it as a simple paradox: *'We, being poor, yet possess all things'*. That is the basis of equality in the Kingdom, and, when it is fully understood, it leaves no room for either jealousy or resentment. We each of us possess it all, by the gift of God.

So the Kingdom is also a place, or a state, of exuberant freedom. No longer do we have to justify ourselves, and no more do we have to earn our place in God's estimation. We don't have to watch each other like hawks to make certain that everyone is playing fair. Rather, we can rejoice in each other's gladness, and meet each other's needs in love, *'leaping with joy to any task for others'*. It is in the Kingdom alone that we experience *'that glorious liberty which belongs to the children of God'*.

How would it be, though, if the Kingdom of God were real for us now, and not just a dream? If all these values and insights applied now? How would it be if we no longer needed to talk about human rights, because our perception was sharpened to the point where we were unable not to see another's need, and where our love had grown to the point where we could not see that need unmet? The only reason I can see for our insistence upon human rights is to protect us from our own nature. How much better if we were to allow the Gospel to transform that nature so that we no longer needed protecting from it! But when is all this going to happen? How long are we going to have to wait? The answer to that is that for each of us it can begin to happen

whenever we like, for the Kingdom of God is within us. The Kingdom is as real for us now as we are capable of experiencing it — its values and insights can be applied now, and sometimes are, and where they are people grow in depth and stature. But just as the parable of the labourer in the vineyard is at odds with our understanding of the world, so we, as part of the Kingdom, find its values and insights at odds with the world around us and within us. The result is often painful conflict — a conflict which brought Jesus to the cross. Beyond the cross, however, lay resurrection and new life for him, and so it does for those who follow him.

Another parable in which the idea of God's initiative appears is the story of the wedding feast. Here a rich man had prepared a reception for his friends and family, and at the appointed time sent out his chief steward to bid the guests to the feast. We may, perhaps, imagine his eager anticipation of the fun and the pleasure which lay ahead for his guests, and of the delight which he would get from that. But as time went by and no guests appeared, he began to worry, until at last his steward returned alone — not one guest was coming! The excuses presented were thin and laughable — and I should think that people did have a good chuckle when the story was first told. One had bought a piece of land without having seen it, but now, suddenly, he had to go and visit it. It would of course, still be there, and be his, if he had left it for another week, but he must go now. 'Please make my apologies'. The next was a rather impulsive character. Like the man who buys a second-hand car by post, or on the basis of a 'phone call, he had bought a team of oxen without trying them out. He now found, in something of a panic, that he had to go and make sure that they were as good as he had been led to understand. 'Sorry, really must dash off — forgive me'. The third was a poor specimen, and must have raised a good laugh from an audience of men. He had only just got married, but was already so hen-pecked that he felt that he dare not go out. And so the sorry tale had gone on, until it was plain that none were coming. It's hardly surprising that the rich man in the parable was angry at the weak excuses which were given, and which, he felt, reflected the depth of his friends' affection, and so he filled his reception with all the most unlikely people.

The amusement would have begun to die away as people started to take in what Jesus had been saying. Obviously the

parable had a particular application to the Pharisees, and any others who thought highly of themselves, and most of them would have been mortally offended! Maybe it touched a sensitive spot in others of his listeners as well — they might reflect that God had been waiting very patiently for them, and that maybe there was not as much time as they had thought. A clear message for us is that there is indeed an urgency about our response to God. We cannot — must not — simply take our time, put him low on our list of priorities, and offer him footling and trivial excuses for delay. The message of this and other parables is clear — if we go on doing that, a time will come when we will have left it too late.

But as well as this dour warning, there is a picture of absolute delight here. Just imagine that, as a cripple or a beggar, you found yourself somewhere near where that reception was to have been held. Suddenly, you find yourself being persuaded, maybe against all your instincts, into a great house obviously decked out for some great occasion. For all your rags you are given a full ceremonial greeting and then presented with a meal fit for a king. What fun you'd have, and how greatly the pleasure would be increased by its sheer unexpectedness. We may be sure that in the Kingdom are all kinds of people who never expected to be there, full of exuberant and infectious delight. Beyond the resurrection we shall meet them — may we be among them!

So Jesus warns us not to take the Kingdom for granted — it is a precious gift, not something that is ours by right. And it is a place of surprises.

The Kingdom is also a place of paradox — of the meeting of all truth, even where it appears to be contradictory. So you will find the harshness of absolute righteousness side by side with mercy, absolute justice with forgiveness, absolute truth with love, and so on. A parable which depicts this side of the Kingdom is the parable of the unforgiving debtor. A servant who owed his master more than he could ever hope to repay him, a sum whose loss would certainly be felt by his master, was forgiven the debt because he asked. On leaving his master's presence he came across a fellow servant who owed him a very little, and he had him thrown into the debtor's prison till the small debt should be paid, deaf to all the pleas which he himself had just presented so successfully. Not surprisingly, he was dealt with with the utmost severity.

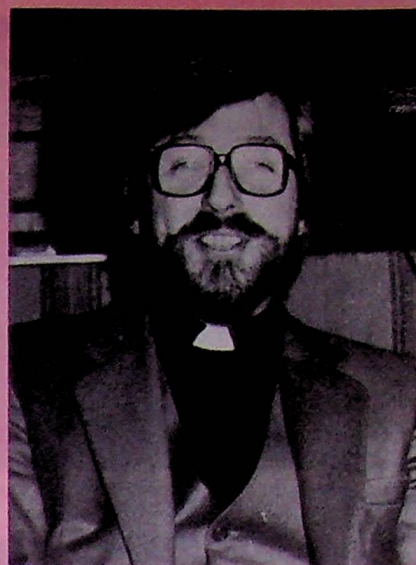


Photo: Scott Shaw

Here we learn that in the Kingdom forgiveness is the rule. Whatever we have done will be forgiven if we ask — it really is as simple as that. For most of us, of course, the difficulty lies in the asking, but that is a problem which we impose upon ourselves rather than one which is imposed from beyond. But the forgiveness we are offered is dependent upon two things. The first is that we ask for it, and if you think about it that's quite logical, for you cannot force forgiveness on anyone. The second condition is that we ourselves offer forgiveness to anyone who has hurt us, and in the Kingdom that condition is absolute. And where forgiveness fails, justice is standing by and will take its course. In the prayer which Jesus taught us, we ask to be forgiven as we forgive others — if we cannot ourselves forgive then there is no hope for us.

When Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica for the first time it was not long before they were brought before the magistrates with the complaint that *'these who have turned the world upside down are come here also'*. What we know of the Kingdom makes that complaint entirely justified. What's more, it was a world which needed standing on its head in that particular way. There's not much evidence of that need having passed with time — rather, the need has become greater. Should not that same complaint be heard against us, for the Kingdom is within us, and its influence and development in the world depend upon us and all with whom it dwells? No man, said Jesus, lights a light and then hides it, but sets it where it will give light to the whole room. If that light is in us we must let it shine out so that men may see our good works, which are nothing more than an expression of the reign of God within us, and learn to love and praise that same God who dwells in them also.

To be concluded

BOOKS

'Love is the Way' written and published by Phil Mason, 1 Whitney Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants NN15 5SL.

Phil Mason has produced another little book about nine people who stand out from the crowd.

Of the four photographs adorning the front cover, Toc H members will instantly recognise that of their founder, Revd 'Tubby' Clayton, and will probably, as I did, turn first to the chapter about him. To try and fit Tubby's life into five pages has meant, of course, that much has necessarily been omitted. Nevertheless, Phil Mason has given a brief account of the foundations of Toc H, and Tubby's association with All Hallows-by-the-Tower. Those readers unfamiliar with Toc H today might be left feeling that the Movement is still a Serviceman's Club where he can obtain a cup of tea and a biscuit: let's hope those who are encouraged to come and give us a try will find something more worthwhile and lasting.

There is a moving account of Mary O'Hara, well known through television as the clear voiced singer accompanying herself on a harp. Her background reveals a beautiful young woman, tragically widowed after only 15 months of marriage to a handsome American poet. Mary felt God calling her to enter a Benedictine Monastery, where she lived for 12 years until through her prayers she found her path back into the world. It was somewhat surprising to find a professional footballer included amongst these personalities. Yet Jimmy Allan has managed to share his time helping children especially in Youth Clubs and Churches and in running a local Hospital Radio.

We find, too, an 83 year old lady, Victoria May, who has devoted her life to helping people where she finds them. And Miss Dorothy Niblett MBE, writing and producing Christian plays while caring for those around her in Holborn.

Most of us will know Thora Hird, a very talented actress, who came from a Christian family at a time when the Church frowned on theatrical folk. She has maintained strong principles and done much to encourage others to find out what Christianity is all about.

Others to be found here include Revd Alex McAdam who, when his Church needed re-roofing when insufficient funds



Photos. Peter Oliver, Looe

'An outstanding success' was the verdict of all those attending a St Valentine's party organised by Looe (Cornwall) Men's Branch for the local senior citizens. The 88 guests included Mrs Elsie Newton - in her 101st year. The Mayor and Mayoress of Looe and other civic and religious dignitaries were present. The evening included an excellent concert organised by Mrs Beryl Clements and compered by Brian Gillman.



Photo: The Scotsman Publication Ltd

The President of Edinburgh 75 Branch presents certificates to two young girls who gained commendations in the Ross McWhirter Foundation/Caxton Publication Young Citizens Award. Edinburgh 75 sponsored these two girls who are heavily involved in voluntary work with the mentally handicapped.

were available, set about the job himself; no mean task for a blind man. Frederick Charrington of Mile End saw the effect of drunkenness on the families of poorly paid men, and spent most of his fortune (inherited largely from public house profits) building schools for the deprived children. And there is William Lax who did so much to make and keep the peace among the inhabitants of the poor and sick living in the dingy streets of Poplar.

Just enough of each personality to whet the appetite. An inexpensive gift at 70p (profits to Christian Charities).

Eileen Clark

The Babysitter Book (how to solve all your child minding problems)
by John Cunningham and Jennifer Curry

Published by Hamlyn Paperbacks. £1.25.

While they have young children, all parents need some type of baby sitting services – if only for the occasional evening out together. Others need reliable, loving care for their young children for anything up to eight hours a day. Parents of handicapped children need respite from the physical and emotional demands of full time attendance on their child. And nowadays Granny rarely lives just down the road ready to pop in and help out.

This book reviews the various degrees of baby sitting and or child minding available these days. It discusses the different options offered by both voluntary and statutory bodies and by self help groups. It suggests points to observe when going round playgroups, child minders' homes, after-school centres or factory creches to help parents assess whether the place would suit their child.

The book's strong point is its list of useful organisations. Having stated the problem and suggested various solutions, the authors give the names and addresses of Societies which could give the detailed, practical help the parent needs to find the right au pair, Council day nursery or occasional creche. (Toc H is mentioned as running holiday play schemes). The authors also suggest which local government departments can be asked for help and advice and how to find out exactly where the department is housed in your locality.

Finally, the book gives information to those who might like to start a play group or out of school care centre themselves. Once again it has a relevant book list and further names and addresses of societies who can help with the legalities and funding evolved. A useful, practical book which covers the needs of all age groups.

B P-B

BE STILL then....

Should you require Bible Reading Fellowship Notes and find difficulty in obtaining them at your local church, we can send them from here for £1 per annum. The Publications Department at Wendover still have copies of 'Yours is the Glory', or you can get these from members of the Regional staff; The Chaplain will let you have a fuller list of daily intercessions, with names, if you just ask him.

BORDON LETTER

by Anne Dudman

COMMITMENT

We have all seen, heard of – and probably grumbled about! – the dedicated football fan. 'We are the champions!' 'Spurs for the cup!' 'Up the 'ammers!' Whatever your personal feelings for the committed fan, he has a lesson to teach us. Come rain or shine, whether the fortunes of his side are good or bad, he supports his team through thick and thin and is utterly dedicated to this. On the other hand if we are old enough, we may find a more meaningful example of commitment in the famous words of Sir Winston Churchill, uttered during what has been described as our darkest hour: 'We will never surrender' was the most relevant part of this well known speech.

We in Toc H, as I see it, are called to be committed to a way of life described in 'The Way Forward' – a life of commitment to Jesus Christ, of dedication to His service in whatever circumstances we find ourselves and a life of loving and serving our fellow man. For Peter and Andrew this involved getting out of a boat and walking after Jesus. For Levi it was a matter of rising up from his desk. Commitments are like that. The full implications of any commitment are seldom obvious from the beginning. I was not entirely sure what I was doing when I entered into a marriage commitment with my husband. I did not know him the way I do now and he certainly did not know me, nor could either of us have foreseen the four children and 15 years of Toc H which have enriched (I think!) our lives.

The moment of commitment is only the beginning. 'Carrying on', even if the going gets tough, is one of the marks of a genuine commitment. It is essentially a simple and straightforward thing; if commitment depended on our achieving sophisticated theological insights, most of us would never make it! The beautiful words of the prayer of St Francis of Assisi, which Toc H have taken for their

own, bear witness to this. Francis was a man as close to God as any man could be and gave up a life of affluence for what he considered a 'pearl of great price', committing himself utterly to it.

A vital part of commitment is declaring which side you're on. As St Paul said, you must 'confess with your mouth' as well as 'believe in your heart'. An essential part of Toc H is sharing as well as caring. It would never have grown as it has done had folk not thought sharing it worthwhile and its very existence in the future is totally dependent on this. There is a certain virtue, unglamorous though it may seem, in plodding on despite doubts, setbacks or persecution. Paul was able to declare at the end of his life, 'I have finished the course'.

The task before us may at times seem daunting, even overwhelming but we have the wonderful gift of God's Holy Spirit to help, encourage and continually strengthen us. It is like an ever fresh spring of pure water, welling up, ready for us to drink and refresh ourselves whenever we need it – just there for the asking. Acts 2 38-39 '... you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. For God's promise was made to you and your children, and to all who are far away – all whom the Lord our God calls to himself'. A life of commitment therefore implies a life of prayer and meditation, not only asking for God's help and strength but listening and seeking His will for us and then acting upon it.

In conclusion, may I commend the following contemplative words to you?

Holy Spirit
with the threads of my life
weave your glorious tapestry

with each breath I take
stretch the fibres even finer

with each step I take
make the strands reach much
farther

with each tear I weep
cut the unravelled edges even closer

with each love I risk
drape the stunning fabric more
softly.

For your diary

Cuddesdon House Holiday Week 1981

There are still vacancies on Nancy and Alan Rennie's holiday week from 15-22 August though there are no more single rooms available. This is a week of activities for folk of all ages which will include exploring the countryside around Cuddesdon by car, on foot and possibly by bicycle.

Applications, please, ASAP to Mr and Mrs A Rennie, 'Haddonway', Guilsborough Road, Ravensthorpe, Northants NN6 8EW.

'Cotswold Quiet Day'

A quiet day will be held on Sunday 5 July at Kemble House, Kemble, Gloucestershire. Participants are asked to bring a picnic lunch and tea, and to assemble from midday. There will be two sessions during the afternoon led by Sue Cumming, Toc H staff, between which there will be a period of quiet. The day will close with an epilogue in the adjacent Parish Church, at about 5 pm. Tea or coffee will be provided.

The charge is £1. Those wishing to attend should write to the Revd H C M Potts, 5 Hilton Close, Hempsted, Gloucester, from whom directions to Kemble are obtainable.

The Mayor of Erewash, Councillor Agnes Johnstone, joins members of West Hallam (Derbys) Men's Branch at one of their weekly club meetings for the mentally handicapped.

Open Forum

'Left, Right and Centre'

I am sorry to see extremism in the March editorial being identified only with 'wild slogans, slanders and violence'.

Politics provides the means of building a better society and naturally there are as many varieties in political opinions as there are in personal desires for the future of our community. The middle of the road may be the safest course, but I disagree with the implication that there is no democratic alternative to moderation.

There will always be a certain consensus in the middle simply because the middle is easy and does not require the exercise of personal responsibility. When the middle way is equated with the popular way, the result can be a pandering to the lowest common denominator: you have only to look at current television programme ratings for this to be demonstrated. I agree that lasting radical reforms have been inspired by what are considered to be middle class attitudes: I do *not* agree that such attitudes are restricted to the middle income and professional groups, nor that these reforms have necessarily been effected with moderation or with popular support.

To build bravely means to take responsibility and to take risks, and I

hope it doesn't mean waiting until I am middle aged!

Julia Murray
London

I welcome your Open Forum interest in politics. It is the 'stuff' we live by, and Christians and Toc H-ers should be prepared to discuss, think fairly, and to take part...

Let me just add in answer to the March editorial that Christ was neither middle aged, middle class nor middle of the road — He was a young, poor, revolutionary!

Name and address supplied

I have read with considerable interest your editorial in the March issue. I am not so sure that I can agree with you that the middle course is the best. As Malcolm Muggeridge said on TV the other night, it is the chap who walks in the middle of the road who gets run over! We have suffered a middle course for the past 30 years or so. The advantage of a Labour government is that you know you are going to get socialist policies. With the Conservatives we still get socialist policies though they may take a little longer!

Frank Barter
Rowlands Castle, Hants



Photo: Ilkerton Advertiser

The Courage to be Toc H

I must say how impressed I was with the article by Tom Gulliver in the March issue: it expressed more than adequately my own thoughts on what Toc H means or should mean to every member.

Amongst some of the criticisms I have heard about 'The Way Forward' are those which claimed that it was too 'churchy' too religious etc. To those people I would say, are we ashamed of our Christian basis? Do we accept Light and prayers as merely something to be endured at our meetings? If so we are surely way out in our thinking, for Toc H is a movement of the Spirit or it is nothing. As Tom says, we are not seeking glory for ourselves but are working to build the Kingdom of God. I often wonder whether many of us stop to consider why we forsake the comfort of our homes for a few hours every week to congregate in less pretentious surroundings. Do we do this from a sense of duty, escapism or what?

In this society of ours, we have so much to offer which the bureaucratic machine cannot hope to match: love, understanding and above all friendship. There are so many problems to be overcome: unemployment, poverty, loneliness, vandalism, drug addiction to name but a few. We in Toc H can only hope to scratch the surface but we can point the way and hope that others outside the Movement will be inspired by our example. If we try to live up to the words of our Lord when he said '*If you do it to the least of one of my brethren you do it to me*', then we will truly be the Movement that God intended.

John Morgan
Ruislip

Disarmament

Do you remember Dr 'Martin Luther King? Oh, yes. Some years ago. Something to do with human rights! In America, a black man. So passes a real Christian. A colossus for a day or two, then completely submerged in every day material things most of which don't matter at all. He dared to believe that Christianity was a simple thing and tried to live it that way. He was shot. So was Gandhi, and Jesus was crucified. So dies every leader who tries to live according to the Christian ideal.

The early Christians beginning with Stephen knew this was an integral part of being a Christian. It was a challenge to be a Christian. One pitted one's life for the faith. So they cheerfully went to the lions or crucifixion, knowing

that their personal lives were as nought to the continuation and spread of the faith.

Why were the Christian Missionaries, recently returned from Iran, perfectly happy in their incarceration with the possibility of death? They had real Christianity. Why is every part of the 'Sermon on the Mount' quoted except 'love your enemies,' and 'turn the left cheek also'? Christianity as practised today has no real challenge. We are too damned comfortable. Even to think of anything calamitous happening to us because of our faith, is just too awful to be considered. We could deny Him thrice or more. Why can't we believe in Christianity with its challenge and possibility of death, as the early Christians did? What is death but a translation? Their deaths bore fruit abundantly in the expansion of the faith. We need persecution to test our faith.

Yes, 'LC', man is naturally promiscuous, taking what he desires by superior strength or guile but Christianity or civilisation is the direct negation of that: The constant strife Divine Spark/Human Ego. Surely you don't imagine that the human ego will eventually win?

I would ask your correspondents in the March issue to re-think their comments in the light of the above.

B D Brown
Charmouth

The Old House

As Deal and Walmer Joint Branch Secretary, I have been asked to write to you as follows:

The report of a SE Kent DEC meeting says that a Toc H day party to Poperinge had requested the use of the kitchen to make tea. The reply stated that a charge of 20 Belgian francs per person would be charged for the use of the kitchen, even though the party only needed to heat water - all tea etc was to be taken from England. It was also stated that there was a possibility that a charge may be made for use of toilets in the near future.

We are appalled that this action, so contrary to the spirit of 'The Old House', should even be contemplated by those running the affairs of 'The Old House'.

We should like to know if this report is true, and if so whether anything is being done to right this gross wrong.

Florence Marshall
Deal

Note: When asked for guidelines on charges for casual visitors, The Old House Advisory Group decided that these

should be 20 francs for drink preparation and 50 francs for main meal preparation. Each of these charges covers the full use of the house facilities. The warden and housekeeper have been given discretion to vary or waive the charges.

Any member who sees this as a grossly wrong method of keeping the Old House going in difficult financial times is invited to suggest alternatives to me for the International Committee to consider. Bribie Island Branch, Queensland, Australia, whose members have little chance of ever visiting Poperinge, has given a donation of £50 to the Old House Endowment Fund. If every UK Branch made a similar contribution, there would be less need to levy vexed charges.

Keith Rea, International Secretary

Toc H Diaries

I would agree with Amanda Dudman (March) about the excellence of the new style 1981 diaries with one proviso. Why after all these years have you made Sunday the last day of the week in 'Last Year 1980', 'This Year 1981', 'Next Year 1982' pages? I assume I am not the only member to use these pages and when I first referred to them, I automatically expected Sunday to be top of the months. I could not understand why I was getting into such a muddle. Is it no longer 'Non-U' to make Sunday the last day of the week?

Gladys Burt
Banbury

Note: We changed publishers for the 1981 Diary and the new one apparently prints this way. These particular pages are not part of the diary we control: our contribution stops on p32. But it is odd and we will take it up with them.

Editor

Help!

A pensioner friend of mine has a collection of old coins, mainly English, of which she is desiring to dispose. She would like, if possible, to have a very rough idea of their value before offering them to a dealer and I was wondering whether there is a reasonably accessible coin collector member of Toc H who would be willing to help.

She would like me to act on her behalf. Any offers from a kind numismatist?

Martin Michael
London

Any offers of help to the Editor, please.



Alloa (Clackmannanshire) Joint Branch opened a library service for patients in Sauchie Hospital in February last.

Inter-Faith Dialogue — a way of life

by John Bowers

Part Three: Words, Meanings and Search for Truth

Meanings are in people not in words; so my meaning may not be your meaning, even when we use the same words, and my meaning today may not be my meaning of yesterday or tomorrow, because I am alive and therefore I change.

I am sure that in my previous articles I sometimes failed to communicate my meaning; so may I now try to explain a little more deeply what I meant by some of the words I used and incidentally illustrate the point I made that words are often inadequate and misleading.

I used the word *religion* and defined my meaning of it as a search for truth and reality. To many people it signifies a system of belief shared by people of a particular faith; and since people have different beliefs, religion divides into religions. To others, religion is rather a body of practices and behaviour inspired by their beliefs. I find both these conceptions of religion unacceptable: the first because I do not think any of the systems of belief has a monopoly of truth and insofar as they are expressed in words — as dogma — they inevitably misrepresent reality; the second because I find so much of the human behaviour inspired by religions totally repugnant to my moral sense.

The Buddhists, who pretend not to have a religion, seem least reprehensible; the Hindus are better at preaching non-violence than at practising it; Islam and Christianity are regrettably at the top of the league for arrogance, deception and sheer brutality. Need I recall the 'holy wars' of Islam, the Crusades, the Spanish conquest and the conversion of

South America, the sale of indulgences, the Inquisition and now Northern Ireland? Indeed I have much sympathy with the idea that we should distinguish *Christendom* from *Christianity* to indicate the difference between the behaviour of zealous *Christians* and the teachings of Jesus Christ. A very unreliable word is *religion*.

And then I used the word *contemplation* to signify surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit. Why *contemplation* rather than *meditation*? St John of the Cross, who understood these things, wrote — '*Meditation is the work of the soul and God is the spectator of it: contemplation is the work of God and the soul is the spectator* (could we say "receiver"?) *of it.*' Meditation then involves an act of will — an effort of the mind to still the mind, even an effort of the body, for example by control of breathing; contemplation is an effortless, though not always easy, surrender. This may seem a subtle distinction and the end results may be similar, but for myself I prefer the way to peace through surrender, rather than the engagement of my own imperfect will in any exercise that develops spiritual powers. — '*Thy will be done*'.

I used *repentance* as a synonym for this experience. Let me explain and in doing so give you an insight which I owe to a disciple of the Ukrainian teacher Gurdjieff (inter-faith dialogue again!)

Sin, to me, is not essentially what you do wrong or omit to do, but rather negative and destructive thinking — the vain imaginings, fantasies, desires, regrets, fears and jealousies that preoccupy so

much of our waking and sleeping minds and cause us so much tension and 'dis-ease'. Evil deeds may follow of course, but not necessarily.

And *repentance*? Not as our priests and prayer books are apt to imply, self abasement, regret, sorrow, misery and still more negative mental activity; so what then? The Greek word for it in the first Gospel texts, which presumably conveys what Jesus said in Aramaic, was *metanoia* — a change of mind, a turning of one's thinking and feeling from negative — destructive to positive — creative — from sin to God. What a misleading use of words in the scriptures when our Church translators changed the Greek *metanoia* into the Latin *poenitare* and so to English *repent*, with its overtones of self flagellation and punishment. Sin is surely its own punishment as the Hindu concept of *Karma* suggests.

'*Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*' — is not then, as I used to think, a threat of damnation, but a challenge to turn around, to think positively, to fear not, to be born again into the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within as well as without — *Islam* in its deepest sense of peace through self surrender.

In my attempt to show that the search for truth and the worship of God is not the prerogative of any one religion or church have I forgotten the words of Jesus: '*Except ye believe in Me, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven*'? No, but I think He was not calling us to adhere to the teachings of a particular church, nor even to the text of the Gospels, but to surrender our egocentric wills in an act of *metanoia* — of belief or being *lief* to the cosmic Christ, '*born of His Father before all worlds*' — the Light that has always dwelt among us and still does — the creative power of Love in the universe. That belief is surely not confined to those '*who profess and call themselves Christian*', indeed it may be the more difficult for them just because they do so.

50 YEARS AGO!

(Extracts from the Toc H Journal for May 1931)



Building Toc H

There are at least two ways of doing things and one is always the best way. As an example of this compare social work during the last century and today. Then, one section of the community rather patronisingly did something for another section: now social workers are to be found in all classes and they work with those they are trying to help. The old way made dependants and created class bitterness: the new way teaches folk to work for their own salvation and produces friendship between helper and helped.

Toc H has from the beginning tried to find the best way of doing things. Often it has concerned itself more with the way than with the results, knowing that the right way will produce the best results.

Toc H is made up of Families of men, each family trying, by the way it lives its corporate life, not only to bind its members more closely to each other and to God, but to build so convincing a thing that men outside Toc H may be attracted to it and compelled to try out these new ways in their own lives. Each member of Toc H is a witness in the world to the Toc H way of thinking and to the new ways of doing things which he has learnt in the family life of his Branch or Group.

Every part of life can be a vehicle for spreading the Toc H spirit — life in the home, at work and at play — provided we let actions speak louder than words. Life for the most part consists of action — or if you will — habits, and Toc H must constantly be spreading the traditions it has already formed and also finding fresh ones in those parts of human life so far untouched by it... These are the kind of things which attract men to Toc H. They say, *'Here is something we can understand, it's not a theory but practice. Let's try it.'*

In the light of these things let us look at finance, and see what kind of tradition we can build so that even money can be made a vehicle of the spirit.

The sensible Unit before it tackles a new corporate job counts its man power and other commitments. Similarly, before deciding to buy anything the unit discovers its permanent income and financial commitments.

'A room of our own' is a splendid idea, if one can be hired at a cost which can be met by the family. If a room cannot be obtained at such a price — don't get one, but meet in each other's houses, or a cafe, or a chip shop, until one is found. Nothing can be worse than turning a unit of Toc H into a Society for Paying Rent of Rooms. Let every member assess himself at some amount per week or month, and pay it whether he is present or absent at the family's meeting...

When a unit knows how much is the gross amount of weekly income, it can easily decide how much to spend on rent, heat, light, food, etc. The amount can be made to include annual subscriptions, the Journal, and a contribution to the Area for missionary work...

With regard to furnishing a room: let every member bring or make what he can. Your friends when they know what experiment you are trying will be glad to give you a chair or a carpet, if between you it is not possible to get enough. The more friends we have taking an intelligent interest in the experiment the more we shall succeed. There will be no difficulty in cleaning and decorating: it should be a corporate job which will teach us a lot about each other. Each man in turn can bring his contribution of food to the weekly 'coffee and biscuits', and on the occasions when there is to be a hot-pot or meat pie supper do give your lady friends a chance to help.

As methods of raising Branch and Group funds, dances, whist and bridge drives are not the best. Here are a few reasons why we should avoid such things:

- a They take man power off our real work, and give the public the idea that Toc H is like other shows — always trying to make money no matter how.
- b We are not amusement caterers: our methods of attracting men are different from those of any other Society. We challenge men not by a pleasant evening but by self sacrifice.
- c We have no appeal to the public which they can understand except that of service, and surely we don't want the public to pay us for our voluntary service.
- d We would not allow our mother or wife to run a show to make money if the rent or the rates at home weren't ready at the quarter end. We'd knock off theatres, cigarettes,

pawn our cigarette case, sell the motor bike: no sacrifice would be too great to prevent such a happening. Think of the effect of a notice appearing in the local news to the effect that — *'Mrs James Smythe is holding an AT HOME on Saturday next in aid of home expenses. All are welcome. Tea. Bridge. Tickets one shilling each.'*

It isn't the family way.

Collecting Money for Jobs

About collecting money for our own or other folk's social work. Toc H ought not to be running Boys' Clubs, Wireless Providing Societies, Holiday Homes, etc in its own name. It ought to be supplying, maybe all the manpower, for we stand for personal service, but the Town in which we live should be prevailed upon to finance its own Boys' Clubs, wireless sets, and poor children's holidays. Our job is to change chaps, not to raise money for causes, be they never so worthy. We want to get in touch with folk. In the early days we may need to organise flag days, and collect money in various ways for other Societies in order to become recognised by Social Service, but, before long, other avenues will open to give us chances directly to serve the poor, the sick, the needy. We want to deal in smiles, kindly actions, cheerfulness and friendship.

The Finance of the Whole Movement

To organise Toc H quite obviously costs money. Organising includes teaching, and without Teachers Toc H would not long remain true: nor would it even start true in distant and isolated places. How do we regard the whole movement of Toc H? Are we just agreeably pleased that Toc H has gone round the world and sends from the farthest corners words which prove that it is the same Toc H as ours, or are we vitally concerned to set up teams of men in every place, who shall fight with us against selfishness, suspicion, greed, hate, and all the things which make for War?

The truth is that in the past a few members only have been responsible for the financial growth of Toc H. Whatever our beliefs about Toc H, until quite recently our actions would lead one to suppose that we were, as units, much more concerned with our local jobs and headquarters than with the spread of Toc H in the world. Now, however, we are beginning to get hold of the bigger idea, and the words 'quota' and 'Builder' are being used. We have seen a vision. The point to decide is whether we shall turn Toc H as a whole into a charity for which we scrounge money anyhow, or whether we shall use money as a vehicle for spreading the spirit for which Toc H stands...

All Wales Festival 1981



Gwyl Cymru 1981

Toc H in Wales will be holding a Festival at Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 26 September 1981.

The Programme for the day will be:

12.00 noon:	Festival Service at the Presbyterian Church, Ithon Road, Llandrindod Wells
1.15 pm to 2.45 pm:	Lunch at the Grand Pavilion
2.45 pm to 5.00 pm:	Festival Afternoon at the Grand Pavilion which will include a Speaker, Community Singing, Musical Entertainment and other items

All Branches are asked to bring Lamps. Districts are asked to send one Banner per District, which will be displayed.

The cost of the day will be as follows:

Adults —	£3.00 (including Lunch) or £2.00 (without Lunch)
Children under 16 —	£2.00 (including Lunch) or £1.50 (without Lunch)

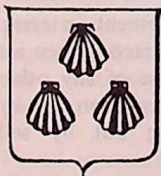
All members of Toc H, friends and families are welcome on this occasion.

Applications for tickets (together with the appropriate money — cheques or postal orders made payable to Toc H) should be sent to:

The Festival Treasurer, Bill Williams, The Brelands, Shrewsbury Street, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire.

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 5p a word (minimum 50p) to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover. Telephone: 0296 623911.



Bruges, Belgium. Hotel Jacobs, (established 50 years) welcomes Toc H parties and individual visitors to this lovely old city within easy reach of other famous cities of art, and of the coast. Comfortable, modernised hotel. Quiet situation. Parking. English spoken. Strongly recommended. Bed and breakfast only. Mr Jules Lietaert, Hotel Jacobs, Ballestraat 1, Bruges, 8000. Telephone: 010-32-50 3398 31/32.

Weymouth — Bed, breakfast and evening meal. Winter weekend breaks £13.50. Weeks from £40. Open all year including Christmas. Bar, free parking, reductions children and small coach parties. Mrs Cole, Kirtleton House, 21 Kirtleton Avenue, Weymouth. Telephone: 0305 785296.

Folkestone, The Adams Family offer you that comfort and service you deserve for your holiday. Comfortable rooms fully centrally heated, good home cooking and good fellowship, we're Toc H members of course. Groups, retreats, seminars, parties of 10 or more at special rates. Brochure and terms on request. Bright & Lil Adams, Claremont Private Hotel, Claremont Road, Folkestone, Kent. Tel. Folkestone (0303) 54897.

Raise funds quickly, easily. Superb ball-pens, combs, key fobs, diaries, etc gold stamped to your requirements. Details: Northern Novelties, Bradford BD1 3HE.

Conwy, dinner and B & B. Weekends, mid-week bookings, ideal for walking, touring, near sea and mountains. Terms £48 per week. Doreen and Bill Baxter, Llys Gwilym Guest House, 3 Mountain Road, Cadnant Park, Conwy, N Wales. Telephone: 049 263 2351.

Christian Singles Holidays/Houseparties/Tours — Switzerland, Devon, Scotland, Sussex. Friendship contacts. Group activities. Nationwide. Christian Friendship Fellowship, Dept/B23, Edenthorpe, Doncaster. (sac).